

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

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AMEMBASSY CAIRO

MEMBASSY JIDDA 1165

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

S E C R E T DOHA 106

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, QA

SUBJECT: AMIR OF QATAR URGES GREATER AMERICAN EFFORTS TO FIND
MIDDLE EAST PEACE

REF: DOHA 1456 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. ON JANUARY 24 AMIR OF QATAR REVIEWED WITH AMBASSADOR HISTORY OF THE ARAB-ISRAEL DISPUTE, INCLUDING PRESIDENT SADAT'S VISIT TO JERUSALEM AND THE LATEST IMPASSE IN THE PEACE TALKS. THE TIME HAD COME FOR THE UNITED STATES TO PROVIDE THE INDISPENSABLE EXTRA PUSH TO MAKE POSSIBLE AN OVERALL PEACE SETTLEMENT. IF THE UNITED STATES LETS PRESIDENT SADAT'S INITIATIVE FAIL ONLY THE LORD WOULD KNOW THE ULTIMATE CONSEQUENCES. BUT THE PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES AS SEEN BY KHALIFA WERE THE DOWNFALL OF PRESIDENT SADAT AND THE GRADUAL DEMISE OF MODERATE ARAB LEADERSHIP. THE ONLY VICTOR IN SUCH A SITUATION WOULD BE THE SOVIET UNION, AN OUTCOME EQUALLY DISASTEROUS FOR THE ARABS AND THE UNITED STATES. END SUMMARY.

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2. I CALLED ON AMIR KHALIFA ON JANUARY 24 AT THIS REQUEST TO HEAR A VIGOROUS AND SOMETIMES PASSIONATE REVIEW OF MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE DAYS OF GAMAL ABDUL NASSER UNTIL THE PRESENT, INCLUDING AN URGENT PLEA FOR THE UNITED STATES TO PUT ENOUGH PRESSURE ON ISRAEL TO ASSURE AN OVERALL MIDDLE EASTERN PEACE SETTLEMENT THAT THE ARAB STATES COULD REASONABLY ACCEPT.

KHALIFA SAID IT WAS THE GREAT TRAGEDY OF THIS ERA THAT THE UNITED STATES AND THE ARAB COUNTRIES FOUND THEMSELVES SO OFTEN AT ODDS. THE LATE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT HAD BECOME IMPATIENT WITH THE UNITED STATES, NOT WITHOUT CAUSE, AND HAD ESTABLISHED STRONG TIES WITH THE SOVIET UNION. THESE TIES HAD HURT THE ARABS AND THE UNITED STATES.

3. AFTER THE 1967 WAR, KHALIFA CONTINUED, THE ARABS HAD MET AT KHARTOUM WHERE MANY LEADERS CALLED FOR AN OIL BOYCOTT OF THE UNITED STATES. KING FAISAL HAD REJECTED THIS KIND OF RETALIATION AGAINST HIS FRIEND THE UNITED STATES, A POSITION WHICH QATAR HAD SUPPORTED. IN THE OCTOBER 1973 WAR, THE UNITED STATES HAD PROBABLY SAVED ISRAEL FROM DEFEAT BY ITS AIRLIFT OF MILITARY SUPPLIES. KHALIFA SAID THAT SOME MAINTAIN THAT ISRAEL WOULD HAVE WON ANYWAY WITHOUT THE AMERICAN AIRLIFT, BUT ANALYSES THAT KHALIFA CONSIDERS VALID ARGUE THAT THIS IS NOT TRUE.

4. IN ANY CASE, KHALIFA STATED HE COULD UNDERSTAND WHY THE UNITED STATES HAD SUPPORTED ISRAEL IN 1973. AT THAT TIME, THE ARAB CONSENSUS WAS THAT ISRAEL SHOULD NEVER BE ACCEPTED IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND ARABS TALKED ABOUT PUSHING THE ISRAELIS INTO THE SEA. GIVEN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE INEVITABILITY OF AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL WAS OBVIOUS. BUT AFTER PRESIDENT SADAT HAD VISITED JERUSALEM AND UNDERTOOK TO MAKE PEACE WITH ISRAEL AND RECOGNIZE IT AS ANOTHER MIDDLE EASTERN STATE, AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR THE POSITIONS OF PRIME MINISTER BEGIN OF ISRAEL WAS
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INCOMPREHENSIBLE TO KHALIFA. THE QATARI AMIR ADDED THAT HE HAD RECEIVED MANY PRIVATE INDICATIONS FROM THE LEADERS OF SYRIA AND JORDAN THAT THEY WERE ALSO PREPARED TO ACCEPT ISRAEL AS ANOTHER MIDDLE EASTERN STATE IF ISRAEL WOULD EVACUATE THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND MAKE SOME KIND OF ARRANGEMENT WITH THE PALESTINIANS.

5. KHALIFA DECLARED THAT THE JEWISH SETTLEMENTS IN SINAI AND THE WEST BANK ARE ALL WRONG. THE WHOLE WORLD CALLED FOR THE EVACUATION OF THESE FEW THOUSAND OF SETTLERS AND PRESIDENT CARTER HIMSELF HAS STATED THAT THEY WERE ILLEGAL.

6. KHALIFA SAID THAT PRESIDENT SADAT'S BOLD INITIATIVE IN GOING TO JERUSALEM HAD SPLIT THE ARAB WORLD INTO THOSE WHO SUPPORTED HIM, THOSE OPPOSED AND THOSE LIKE QATAR WHICH HAD BEEN FAVORABLY DISPOSED BUT FOR REASONS OF AREA-WIDE POLITICS HAD REMAINED SILENT. NOW IT WAS UP TO THE UNITED STATES WHETHER SADAT'S INITIATIVE SUCCEEDED OR FAILED. IF IT FAILED, PRESIDENT SADAT WAS BOUND TO BE REPLACED BY A MUCH MORE RADICAL LEADER. THE UNITED STATES SHOULD NOT BELIEVE THAT THE DISTASTE THE ARABS FELT FOR THE SOVIET UNION AND FOR COMMUNISM MEANT THAT COMMUNISM COULD NOT BECOME THE DOMINANT FORCE IN THE ARAB WORLD. IT ALREADY HAD

VERY GREAT INFLUENCE IN IRAQ, LIBYA AND SOUTH YEMEN. AND, IF SADAT FAILED, KHALIFA WAS CONVINCED THAT THE LEFTIST AND COMMUNIST FORCES WOULD COME TO POWER IN EGYPT. AND THAT MEAN A BLEAK FUTURE FOR THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP IN SAUDI ARABIA, NOT TO MENTION THE SMALLER OIL SHIEKDOMS IN THE GULF.

7. I TOLD KHALIFA THAT WHILE THE PRESENT RUPTURE IN NEGOTIATIONS WAS INDEED CAUSE FOR CONCERN, I WAS CONVINCED THAT NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE RESUMED AND THAT A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST WOULD BE ACHIEVED. I WAS CERTAIN THAT PRESIDENT CARTER'S DETERMINATION TO FIND A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE SETTLEMENT HAD NOT WEAKENED. AND I NOTED THAT SECRETARY VANCE HAD STATED THAT EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS WERE LIKELY TO RESUME IN SOME FOR OR ANOTHER WITHIN A WEEK TO TEN DAYS.

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8. COMMENT: ALL OF AMIR KHALIFA'S PRESENTATIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION, INCLUDING THIS LATEST ONE, ARE ESSENTIALLY THE SAME. KHALIFA DEEPLY FEARS THAT IF PRESIDENT SADAT FAILS HE WILL FALL, AND IN THE AFTERMATH THE LEADERSHIP IN SAUDI ARABIA AND THE GULF COUNTRIES WILL ALSO BE IN AN UNTENABLE SITUATION, UNDER ATTACK FROM LEFTIST AND COMMUNIST FORCES WHO WILL CLAIM THAT THE UNITED STATES CAN NEVER BE RELIED UPON TO BRING PEACE TO THE MIDDLE EAST. END COMMENT.

KILLGORE

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